

Delta Levee Investment Strategy Update

Summary: This report is one of a continuing series that provides an update on the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) activities related to the Delta Levee Investment Strategy. Staff will report on overall project progress and efforts related to methodology development, the independent peer review panel, public outreach and communication, and the draft issue paper.

Background

The Delta Reform Act states "The Delta Plan shall attempt to reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by promoting effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and strategic levee investments" (Water Code Section 85305(a)). In addition, "The council, in consultation with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, shall recommend in the Delta Plan priorities for State investments in levee operation, maintenance, and improvements in the Delta, including both levees that are a part of the State Plan of Flood Control and non-project levees" (Water Code Section 85306).

The Delta Plan adopted in May 2013 established interim priorities for State investments in Delta levees (RR P1 and 23 CCR Section 5012). It also recommended that the Council, in consultation with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB), the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), local agencies, and the California Water Commission, promptly update those interim priorities (Delta Plan recommendation RR R4 *Actions for the Prioritization of State Investments in Delta Levees*).

Delta Levees Investment Strategy

The Delta levees investment strategy that the Council is developing will incorporate a new approach for investing State funds in Delta levees. This new approach should guide the ongoing investment of State funds in a way that considers the interconnection of assets protected by levees, the exposure of these assets to different risk factors, beneficiaries of levee protection, and appropriate cost share allocation for this protection. This approach also must recognize that assets such as water supply, ecosystem health, and the unique values of the Delta are not only valuable to the State of California and residents of the Delta, but to a range of beneficiaries.

This new approach will be developed by working together with other affected State and local agencies, Delta residents, and a wide variety of Delta stakeholders. Last May, the Council approved a contract with ARCADIS to assist.

The Delta levees investment strategy will use a comprehensive methodology that considers the assets protected by Delta levees, the threats to Delta levees, the multiple

beneficiaries of Delta levee investments, and both structural and non-structural approaches for reducing risk. The outcome of the project will be a final report that proposes updated priorities for State investments in Delta levees, including revisions to the Delta Plan's flood risk regulatory policies, recommendations, and narrative, and related Delta Plan revisions. The strategy may also be submitted to the California Legislature to help guide future decisions about funding.

Update of Activities

In September and October, the project team compiled data that will be used to develop a methodology for the investment strategy, completed formation of an independent scientific review panel for the project, completed a project communications plan, conducted several outreach meetings and began revising the draft Delta Levee Investment Strategy Issue paper that was submitted to the Council in September – public comments are due by October 27.

Methodology Development

- Staff has continued to coordinate with the Department of Water Resources and Delta Protection Commission and is working with other entities to obtain various data sources for this project. ARCADIS is currently reviewing and organizing the data to identify adequacy of the data and any gaps that exist.

Independent Scientific Review Panel

- All positions for the seven-member independent review panel have been filled. Names of the panel members and their areas of expertise will be provided at a future meeting once contracts have been executed.
- The Council's Lead Scientist has completed the charge to the Independent Peer Review Panel to review the methodology used to develop the levee investment prioritization tool (see Attachment 1). Questions that the Panel will be asked to consider relate to relevance, credibility, transparency, and additional perspectives.

Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Efforts

- Staff have completed a communication and outreach strategy that identifies the engagement process and overall timeline, and also includes a schedule of key events and milestones that will be the focus of discussion as we engage various stakeholders. This strategy includes identifying outside technical expertise needed for input related to developing the methodology. Key elements of the communication strategy will be posted on the Council's website at <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-levee-investment-strategy>.

- Staff continues to schedule informal outreach sessions with various Delta stakeholders and are planning additional future sessions.
- Staff gave presentations at other public meetings including the October 15 California Water Commission meeting and the October 24 Central Valley Flood Protection Board meeting.

Delta Levee Investment Issue Paper

- Staff is revising the draft issue paper per Council direction at the September 25 meeting and will address public comments received by the October 27 deadline.

Next Steps

Council staff and the ARCADIS team will continue work on, or begin work on, the following tasks in November and will report to the Council monthly on the status of these efforts and other tasks as described in the scope of work for this project. Immediate next steps for this project include:

- Continuing meetings with key Delta stakeholders and planning for the first public workshop in early December.
- Providing presentations on the project at other public meetings.
- Continuing to compile and begin analyzing data for methodology development.
- Revise the Delta Levee Investment Strategy Issue Paper based on Council direction and public comments received.
- Completing the contracting process for members of the independent scientific review panel.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Delta Science Program Independent Science Panel Review:
Methodology and Scientific Basis to Support a Delta Levee Investment
Strategy: Scope and Charge to Reviewers

Contacts

Dustin Jones
Supervising Engineer

Phone: (916) 445-5891

You Chen (Tim) Chao
Senior Engineer

Phone: (916) 445-0143